

# ACADEMIC DEFINITIONS

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## Academic Program Definitions

**Degree program:** A degree program is an area of study approved as such by the university and the Board of Regents and listed on the official inventory of degree programs (e.g., English, social work, pharmacy, accounting). The degree, which is a credential signifying a rank or level of educational attainment and which is conferred on students who have successfully completed a degree program, is represented by the official degree designation (e.g., B.A.—Bachelor of Arts, B.S.—Bachelor of Science, etc.)

Associates degrees are a minimum of 60 credits. Bachelor's degrees are a minimum of 120 credits. Master's degrees are a minimum of 30 credits beyond the bachelor's. There is no specified minimum for doctoral programs other than those required by accrediting agencies.

**Major:** A major is a field of study within an approved undergraduate degree program, having its own curriculum. A degree program may have more than one major. A major must have a minimum of 30 credits. A major may share (overlap) a maximum of 9 credits with the undergraduate core curriculum, or with another major.

**Minor:** A minor is an area of study outside of the major that permits students to pursue a secondary academic discipline. Students may not earn a minor in the same field as their major. A minor must include at least 18 credits. Minors are only available to students earning a baccalaureate degree. A minor may share (overlap) a maximum of 6 credits with the core curriculum, with a major, or with another minor.

**Concentration** (AKA “area of emphasis” or “track”): A concentration is a specific subject area of focus within an approved degree program. A concentration must be at least 12 credits.

**Certificate:** A credit-bearing certificate program is a coherent, specialized curriculum designed for students seeking a specific body of knowledge for personal/career development or professional continuing education. Certificates may be earned by students already enrolled at the university, or may be stand-alone programs where students enroll specifically to earn the certificate. Credit-bearing certificates may be offered at undergraduate or graduate levels and are a minimum of 12 academic credits. The university also offers non-credit, continuing education certificates which consist of continuing education credits (CEUs). CEUs are not interchangeable with regular academic credits. Concordia also offers graduate professional development (GPD) credits for students seeking professional development experiences (in Graduate Education only); these are not interchangeable with regular academic credits.

**Pathway:** A pathway is a set of undergraduate course sections designed to foster particular skills or knowledge that is interdisciplinary in nature. Pathway sections are so designated on the course schedule, and completion of a pathway is indicated on the transcript. Pathways are a minimum of 21 credits.